1: Rattray E, G-5 (ca. 1920)1932
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Look to my sickness that it may cease. If any one is doing this to me, catch him for me, or kill him and let me get health and strength.' 796

Another: 'I was in my town when I heard of this god, that he is strong, so I came to lean on him that he may help me. I am a person who drinks gin always and I am become a drunkard. Help me to stop drinking. Again, whatever work I do, I get in debt. If some one is doing all this to me, let *nana* catch him or kill him for me.' 782

When I state that these supplicants were educated men and women, some of whom owned large businesses, well-furnished European houses, and not a few of them their own cars, in which they had come hundreds of miles to visit this pagan god, the power and influence of the old beliefs may readily be imagined. I need not multiply examples. All the petitions were based on the same formula—the god was *nana*, the supplicants had come to lean upon him (*dan nebo*). They were promised nothing. If their prayers were answered, they would bring back an offering. Nearly every one asked for 'money' or 'profit'. 796 177 771

When the servite was ended, we all backed out again into the sunlight and were led, complete silence being enjoined upon us, to the entrance of the second cave. Here the offerings were sacrificed over a mound so smothered in congealed blood and feathers as to hide its surface completely. 796

The *Ten'dan'* lifted up a round stone and tapped it against this altar. Each person then handed him the offering he or she had brought. Its throat was cut, the blood flowed on the altar, and the sacrifice was cast down. My sheep was sacrificed last of all. The photograph, Fig. 77, shows the old *Ten'dan'* about to cut its throat. All this was carried out in complete silence. We all then returned to where every one had undressed, and each person was smeared with a line of red clay on the side of each cheek, between the breasts, on each forearm, on the legs and back. This ended the ceremony. [302]

2: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1945
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CHAPTER IV

CLANSHIP: THE NAMOOS

The Dispersion of Mosuor biis

FOR the Namoos of Tongo[1] history begins with Mosuor. Of his Mampuru forbears nothing is known. When a Namoo piously invokes the names of Toohug and Gbamwaa, the mythical founders of the Mampuru State, these are to him mystical words. Dominated in his moral and mystical thought by the ancestor cult, he is ready to infer that they were probably remote ancestors of the Mampuru stock; but no one in Taleland knows the myths which the Mamprusi relate about them. There is at the present time constant intercourse between the Tallensi and the Mamprusi, especially between the Tale chiefs and the court of the Paramount Chief of Mampurugu (*Mampurugna'ab*); but the myth of Toohug and Gbamwaa has not diffused to the Tallensi, for it has no relevance to their internal social structure, and the names alone suffice to symbolize the bond of common stock with the Mamprusi.

Mosuor died at Tongo. His grave indicates where his homestead stood, a stone's throw from the sacred dancing-ground, Giŋgaaŋ Puhug, which was the site of Tɛndaan Gɛnɛt's homestead. After Mosuor's death, it is related, his eldest son, Naŋkamuŋ, wished to assume the chiefship at once; but a younger son, Sɛyahɔg, insisted that his father's death should be ceremonially reported to the Mampurugna'ab, the fountain-head of their chiefship (na'am). He went secretly to do so, and was invested with his father's chiefship by the Chief of the Mamprusi in return for a payment of 100 cattle. Naŋkamuŋ, resenting his younger brother's guile in robbing him of his patrimony, thereupon seceded and settled at Yaməlɔg beside the people of Sɔk and their tɛndaana. This place, it is related, came to be called so because Naŋkamuŋ declared that he would go and settle just nearby (*yama yama*), where he could keep in touch with his kinsfolk at Tongo.

Sie, which the Namoos say means beside (*sie*, side) Yaməlɔg, was founded by another 'son' of Mosuor, Kuŋkye. Sie people claim to have been the first settlers in the area. On the other hand, with characteristic emphasis on their own priority, Sawalɔg people assert that Kuŋkye was received by their ancestor the Sawalɔg tɛndaana, who had 'sprouted from the earth'. The tɛndaana allowed him to settle there beside (*sie*) himself, after having presented him ritually to the Earth shrines. This myth is a replica of that told by the Gbizug people, and symbolizes a structural and ideological relationship of the same order as that which exists between Gbizug and Tongo.

Yet another 'son' of Mosuor—the exact genealogy is obscure, since *bii*, child, can be used to refer to any descendant—migrated to Biuk, where his descendants adopted the speech and customs of the Gɔris.

[1] The correct vernacular form is Tɔŋo, but we shall keep the more familiar English form throughout this book.

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[p. 39]

2: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1945
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the fowl, the man merely said, 'The fowl is thirsty'. Thus his wife knew that people had been deceiving her and she remained with him. Afterwards she bore a daughter, and vowed solemnly that her child should never eat fowl. Later a son followed, and the man declared that the boy too must refrain from eating fowl. That is why the first-born son and first-born daughter of all Namoos have the fowl avoidance; but later children may eat it, for if they, too, were prohibited, who would consume the fowls which men sacrifice to their ancestors?

If we bear in mind the enormous importance Tallensi attach to marriage and progeny, we can sympathize with the respect they pay to the common domestic fowl in return for this apparently trivial benefit conferred on their ancestor. Of course nobody knows or cares who this ancestor was, but it would not occur to anybody to doubt the truth of this tale. Every day some animal, domestic or wild, becomes a shrine (*bayor*), the symbol and medium of contact with the ancestor spirits, to some person or another in every Tale settlement; and the occasion of this ritual transformation of a commonplace creature is always a piece of good or ill fortune associated with it. Nor would the fact, admittedly contrary to ordinary experience, that a fowl broke into speech, disconcert the natives. They see no need for explaining away such incongruities, either by invoking the supernatural or by referring it to a fabulous age when animals possessed the power of speech. 'That is the story', they declare, and that is enough for them; as we might say, it fits in with the logic of the myth.

This casual attitude to the myth is due to the fact that the natives attach little importance to it in comparison with the observance it seeks to explain. For the myth is simply a formulation of the idea that the fowl taboo is the fundamental symbol of the social definition of Namoos. Everywhere within the social ambit of the Tallensi, and at all times, Namoos are those who are subject to distinctive ritual and moral restrictions in virtue of their agnatic descent; and amongst these the fowl taboo is crucial. That is how others think of Namoos, and that is how they themselves visualize their social identity. Through these observances the individual identifies himself in thought and feeling with the fraternity of clans of which his own is a part and, what is of equal significance, with the dead but still regnant forebears.

The anonymity of the ancestor in the myth shows that he stands for the prototype of all the ancestors who must necessarily have gone before in order that the present generation of men should exist, and to whom the living owe their whole social order. It is a notion entirely in keeping with the ideas underlying the kinship system of the Tallensi. But for the intervention of the fowl, says the myth, the Namoo stock might never have come into existence; and the taboo which commemorates that event came into being with the birth of their stock, which was at the same time the birth of their role in society. All Namoos, it must be remembered, are concerned with their totemic observances; for those who are themselves exempt from them have this privilege only because they are the brothers or sisters of individuals who are compelled to observe them.

The fowl taboo and the ritual observances associated with it symbolize

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Duunkpaləg in the corporate life of Zubiuŋ can be judged from the frequency of the personal name Duun. This name is given to every child placed under the spiritual guardianship of this *Bɔyar*. There is not a single family in Zubiuŋ without at least one child named Duun.

All the reciprocal duties and privileges of the three maximal lineages testify to the unity of Zubiuŋ as a clan. To cite funerals again, when a death occurs in one of the lineages it is the duty of the representatives of the other two to conduct the main rites and to give general help and supervision, according to the maxim '*sunzɔp m-maan yɛla*—brother-lineages look after one's (ceremonial) affairs'. At the funeral ceremonies of the head of one of the maximal lineages it is obligatory for the other two maximal lineages to be represented by their heads, through whom they must send the prescribed food contributions. In return for their services and support these two maximal lineages are entitled to receive prescribed portions of the animals slaughtered in honour of the deceased, and of the beer and cooked food distributed at the funeral.

Ritual Differentiation and Integration of Zubiuŋ

At the same time, each maximal lineage has a large and jealously guarded measure of autonomy relative to its two *sunzɔ* lineages. This is most conspicuously embodied in the ritual office of tɛndaana (Master, or Custodian, of the Earth). Each of the three lineages has its own tɛndaana-ship, held by the head (*kpeem*) of the lineage. This office is primarily associated with the cult of the Earth (*tɛŋ*) in its mystical aspect, whose shrines (*tɔŋgbana*) are the sacred spots found in profusion throughout the Mole-Dagbane culture area. An Earth shrine (*tɔŋgban*) may be a grove of trees, a pool, a stream, a pile of boulders, a single tree, or merely a small bare patch in the midst of cultivated fields. In the settled parts of Taleland half a mile's walk along any foot-path takes one past two or three *tɔŋgbana*, so numerous are they.

Tɔŋgbana do not all rank equally, though all are equally the shrines of the Earth. At Zubiuŋ the most important *tɔŋgbana* come under the joint custody of all three maximal lineages. On important ceremonial occasions in which the clan acts as a corporate unit, such as the installation of a new tɛndaana, all three tɛndaanas and their elders assemble to perform sacrifices at these *tɔŋgbana*. One of these, Zukɔk, is supreme over all the Earth shrines of Zubiuŋ. It symbolizes the Land of Zubiuŋ (*Zubiuŋ tɛŋ*), the local subdivision of the Earth-as-a-whole in its mystical aspect, with which Zubiuŋ is directly connected. This is another focus of clan unity.

We shall later elucidate more fully the complex relationship of these two religious foci of clan unity among the Talis. It must suffice to say that, at Zubiuŋ, Duunkpaləg, the *Bɔyar*, and Zukɔk, symbolizing the Earth, are mystically coupled together but not identical. In doctrine and in rite they form the polar principles of a single religious system. Together they constitute the axis, as it were, around which the religious ideas and values of the natives are constructed. In relation to the structure of lineage and clan *Bɔyar* and *tɛŋ* work as complementary values and sanctions. When either is the centre of a rite or ceremony, homage is paid to the other as well. In all corporate ceremonies, such as those accompany-

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ing the installation or the funeral of a tendaana, both receive sacrifices. But the *Bɔyar*, like its homologue among the Namoos, is more precisely a symbol of the continuity and perpetuity of the clan and its constituent lineages. It is more explicitly a focus of that solidarity of the clan or the lineage which is deemed to follow automatically from the fact of their common agnatic descent. The Earth, on the other hand, though its cult is also intrinsically bound up with the agnatic line, stands rather for the common interests and common values embodied in the customary norms and sanctions of collective life.

It is significant, however, that the *Bɔyar* cult and the Earth cult, both of which serve to express the unity and solidarity of the clan, also serve to emphasize the relative autonomy of its constituent maximal lineages. Each maximal lineage has its private lineage *bɔyar* (*dugni bɔyar*), the shrine of its particular lineage ancestors, worshipped only by members of that lineage, and the *dugni bɔyar* is conceived as itself a part of, or a derivative of, the clan *Bɔyar* (Duunkpaləg). It is, so to speak, the domestic incarnation of the great External *Bɔyar*. In the same way each maximal lineage has its private Earth shrine, associated specifically with that part of Zubiun which it occupies, and under the sole custody of its own tendaana. Both in relation to the *Bɔyar* cult and to the Earth cult, the tendaana of each maximal lineage represents the entire lineage. It is through him that these mystical powers are mobilized on behalf of the lineage, and through the joint action of all three tendaanas that they are mobilized for the good of the clan.

The integration of the clan on the religious plane is characteristic of its corporate solidarity in all matters of common interest. Every corporate activity presumes the relative autonomy of the three maximal lineages in relation to one another. The unity of the clan is built up on the relative mutual independence of its segments. Common interests emerge as a balance of divergent emphases, and conversely the autonomous interests of the three constituent maximal lineages of the clan are aspects of the common interests of the whole clan. Thus the rights and duties, privileges and obligations, vested in each maximal lineage, through the mutual adjustment and articulation of which corporate action occurs and clan unity emerges, are jealously guarded by each lineage.

Many incidents could be quoted to substantiate this analysis, but one will suffice. When the final rites of installation for the new Kpayara-yayar tendaana were being carried out I accompanied him and his lineage elders to Duunkpaləg, where the most important rite of the series was to be performed. We were soon joined by the Yakɔra representatives. The Yapaasdem did not come for another hour or so. Indignant comments were made about their tardiness. It was said to be a chronic fault of theirs, and they were criticized also for neglecting their duty as junior *sunzɔp* who should have come to escort the tendaana-elect to Duunkpaləg. The Yapaasdem, said one of the elders, were going the way of all things to-day, scorning established custom and taking the course they found most convenient to themselves 'In a little while', he stormed, 'we shall all (that is, each maximal lineage) be sacrificing separately.' The other elders protested in a chorus at this, exclaiming, 'Oh no, we won't abandon our

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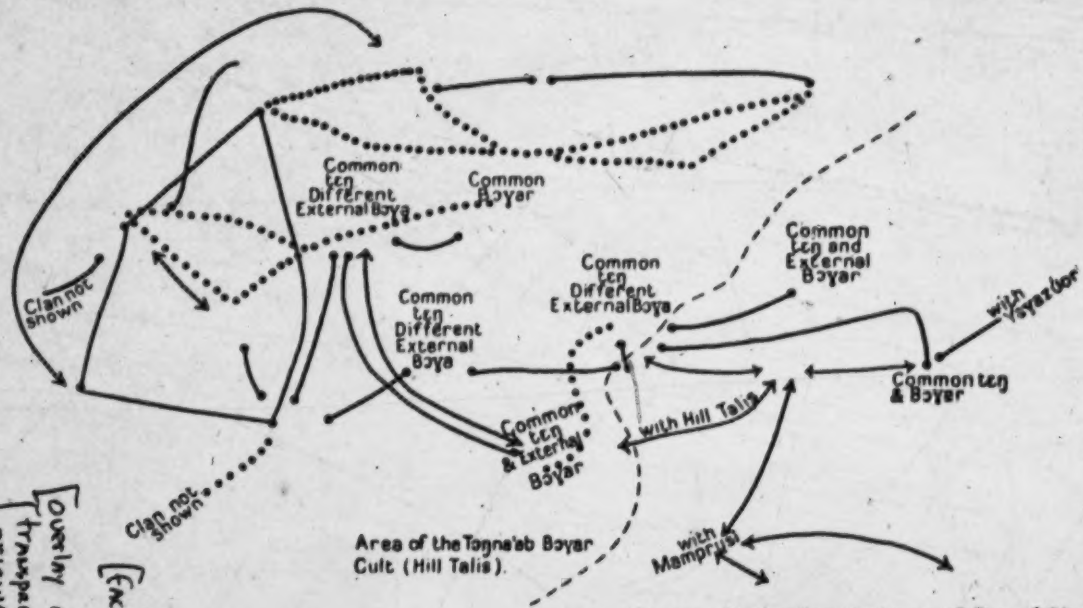

Diagram illustrating the Nexus of Ties of Ritual Collaboration
(only a small selection of these ties shown)

Clans or Maximal lineages connected by lines thus ●——● collaborate in the Cult of the Earth (tɛŋ) and/or in rites of the Festival Cycle associated with that cult. Clans connected by continuous line or figure collaborate jointly in Cult of the Earth.

Clans or Maximal lineages connected by lines thus ←——→ have reciprocal or complementary ritual relationships associated with politico-ritual offices mainly chiefship (na'am) or Tɛndaanaship.

Clans or Maximal lineages connected thus • • • collaborate in cult of External Bɔɣar (Tɔŋna'ab); those connected by continuous dotted lines do so jointly.

[Facing p. 108]

[overlay on p. 109]
[transparent in original]

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other non-Namoos. It is recognized by all Tallensi that these taboos are on a par with the fowl taboo of the Namoos, though they have, in many respects, a more complex meaning. Among both groups of clans, no doubt because totemic taboos are so clear-cut and categorical, it is considered unthinkable for an adult in full command of his faculties to violate (*galəm*) a totemic taboo deliberately. The sanctions for an accidental breach are the same in both groups, but this is an extremely rare occurrence. It is enough to see the spontaneous repugnance of small children to unaccustomed or forbidden food to understand why they keep totemic taboos so conscientiously. A man never allows a prohibited animal into his house; and women married to men who may eat animals forbidden to themselves take scrupulous care to avoid a possible lapse. His totemic taboos appear to the individual as a simple, unequivocal moral precept.

Talis state their totemic avoidances in the form: 'We do not eat (*ti pu ɔbət*) or we taboo (*kih*) such and such an animal', meaning a particular species of animal. They explain that these avoidances are obligatory on a person through the fact of his being born a member of a certain maximal lineage; they are obligatory on both men and women from birth to death. Hence the wives of Talis have to refrain from eating animals prohibited to their husbands, though not to their own maximal lineages, when they have infants at the breast, or, in some clans, throughout their child-bearing period. For, as the natives explain, 'Food changes into milk', and the infant would be committing a sin indirectly. This problem does not arise amongst the Namoos, since all Tale women avoid eating the domestic fowl from the beginning of pubescence onwards. It is one of several food taboos observed by women with the utmost strictness, not for ritual reasons but purely as a matter of feminine propriety.

As with the Namoos, Talis totems and the totems of their congeners in the Sie area, are mythically validated, as we shall see presently. But like Namoos, Talis never express awe or reverence for a clan or lineage totem animal. It is an ordinary, commonplace creature devoid of anything in the nature of a halo of sacredness. They do not, for example, call a totem a sacred object (*bayər*). The emphasis is on the avoidance, the act of conduct as such. There is a notion of moral obligation in keeping the avoidance, but it is directed, as we shall see, to the ancestors and not to the totem animal in its own right.

Talis are not forbidden to kill an animal which is their totemic avoidance, though they would not wantonly do so. They may, and often do, catch these animals alive and sell them to people who are permitted to eat them; for many of these totem animals are considered to be great delicacies.

In one respect, however, the totemic avoidances of the Talis and their congeners differ from the fowl taboo of the Namoos. The former swear an oath by their totems, whereas the Namoos never invoke the fowl in this way. Like the Namoos, Talis can swear by the loin cover they put on their dead. The formula is the same as for the Namoos, with the substitution of the name of the animal whose skin is used: 'By my father and his sheep (or oribi) and his three cowrie shells.' This is a solemn oath, uttered in response to a serious accusation, in proof of one's innocence,

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769 778 881 aegis. Initiation into the *Bɔyar* cult binds the individual by the most solemn covenant known to the natives to uphold the social order bequeathed to the living by the Ancestors; and this is a bond that transcends the lineage. It requires the interests of the lineage to be subordinated to those of the wider community in particular circumstances.

627 794 881 That this is so can be seen from the fact that the most solemn oath of the Hill Talis is the oath by the External *Bɔyar*—'(By) my Ancestor Tɔŋna'ab and his late-millet flour water (*Nyaab Tɔŋna'ab ni u za zɔm kuom*)'. It is strictly forbidden to use late-millet flour in sacrifices at the External *Bɔyar*. The climax of the initiation ceremony is the administration of this oath to the novices at the *Bɔyar*, pledging them, in the name of a thing sternly excluded from its rites, to observe the tenets of the cult and keep the secret of its rites. This oath, in contrast to the oath by the totem animal, is a matter of the utmost gravity. 'If we swear thus', an elder of one of the Hill clans explained to me in tones of obvious awe, 'we all who are Talɔŋ, you know we are speaking the truth. If you swear thus and lie you will die.' It is an oath which would be resorted to only in an extremely serious matter; and its gravity for the Hill Talis is known all over Taleland.

688 627 881 The sanction of the oath is the covenant entered into by a man when he is initiated. The *Bɔyar* destroys a perjurer. 'Will you not be going into the *Bɔyar* to sacrifice, and eat of the (sacrificial) flour and (sacrificial) fowl? This is what kills you (if you swear falsely)', a ritual functionary of the cult declared. It is not even a question of literal participation in the ritual of worship at the *Bɔyar*. A man who has offended it cannot offer sacrifice to his own dead father at his own home; for his father had, in his lifetime, taken part in the sacraments of the cult, and was joined to all the ancestors, whose common shrine is the *Bɔyar*, on his death. By the same reasoning even uninitiated members of clans that belong to a *Bɔyar* congregation can validly use the oath, though they would be unlikely to do so. For they are also 'the children of the *Bɔyar*'; their life, too, is 'in the keeping' of the ancestors who abide there. They will become initiated members of the cult if they are men, and they are members of the lineages incorporated into the cult if they are women.

182 771 When Hill Talis are asked how their totemic taboos are connected with the cult of the External *Bɔyar*. they say 'they belong together (*ba tɔŋa taaba*)'. The phrase implies that the two things are different but intrinsically related. In fact, the Hill Talis think of all their ritual institutions as being somehow connected with the *Bɔyar* cult. For behind all of them stands the sanction of the ancestor spirits. Totemic taboos hold independently of the *Bɔyar* cult. Breach of them, or a false oath by the totem animals, does not provoke the wrath of the *Bɔyar*. Fines are paid to the *Bɔyar* for a breach of totemic taboos because it is the supreme manifestation of the ancestors. If a person transgresses an obligation that falls on him by virtue of his descent, it is obviously necessary to appease the ancestors. On the same principle, the Hill Talis hale an adulterous wife to the External *Bɔyar* in order to force her to confess; for her sin endangers the life of her husband and children and thus jeopardizes their line of descent. This is a matter of concern to the ancestors, not only

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to the husband's own ancestors, but to all the ancestors, for the whole social order is based on the continuity of the patrilineal line.

One reason why the totemic taboos of the Hill Talis 'belong together' with the cult of the External *Bɔyar* is because all Tale ritual institutions tie up with the ancestor cult; for Tale ritual ideas and values are, as we have several times emphasized, a reflex of the social structure and this rests on a genealogical basis. But the connexion can be seen in more precise terms. Membership of the lineage, which means adherence to the norms of lineage relations symbolized in the totemic taboos, is a prerequisite for membership of the clan and for admission to the *Bɔyar* cult. Just as the constitution of the *Bɔyar* congregation embraces and rests upon the lineage and clan, so the ritual values and observances of the *Bɔyar* cult draw the ritual symbols of lineage identity and continuity into their orbit. The External *Bɔyar* is a transposition of the lineage *bɔyar* to a higher level of social integration; allegiance to the External *Bɔyar* is an extension, on this higher level, of the bond with the lineage *bɔyar*. In terms of ritual observances, admission to the covenant of the External *Bɔyar* presupposes observance of certain totemic taboos. And this mutual implication is strengthened by the fact that every male of a Talis lineage is bound to become a member of the *Bɔyar* cult. Lineage, clan, and *Bɔyar* congregation represent three interconnected levels of social relations and the ritual observances that correspond to them. The simplest level of this field system implies the existence of the most complex which in turn presupposes the existence of the simplest.

It is a point of significance that women, though bound by the totemic taboos as members of the lineage, are not admitted to the cult of the External *Bɔyar*. This is not only because the cult of the ancestors is the exclusive province of men. Women marry out of the lineage; they do not pass on to their children physical or social membership of it; they do not perpetuate the lineage. It is the men who maintain and perpetuate the corporate unity and continuity of the lineage; and it is on these that both the clan structure and the *Bɔyar* cult rest. It is the men who both keep the lineage going as a social entity symbolized in its totemic taboos, and maintain the social order of which the External *Bɔyar* is the pivot.

In sum, then, the totem stands for the relative autonomy of the maximal lineage, the External *Bɔyar* for the interdependence of lineages in a single religious community; and the two ritual principles fuse owing to the fact that this ideological community is constituted by the knitting together of maximal lineages in local clusters. At the geographical centre of the ideological community, the summit of the Tong Hills, the fusion is most complete. The avoidance of the tortoise and the water-tortoise is shared by all the clans of the centre, and is felt by all the Talis to symbolize particularly membership of the ideological community as well as the narrower allegiance to the lineage. But some clans and lineages at the centre have additional or exceptional totems; and the farther we move from the centre towards Gbizug and Ba'ari out of the region of the External *Bɔyar* cult as practised by the Hill Talis, the more conspicuous do these extra avoidances become. Maximal lineages and clans which have

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extra or exceptional avoidances usually consider them to be more distinctive of themselves, though not more important, than the general taboos. In other words, these avoidances emphasize the relative autonomy of the maximal lineage in opposition to the coherence of the ideological community; and this is the more conspicuous the farther away from the centre a clan is located.

It is significant, however, that clans with additional or exceptional totems are not considered to be the less Talis for that reason. The people of Degal, for instance, who belong to the central cluster of Hill Talis, claim to be 'Talɔŋ' *par excellence* in virtue of their supposed descent from the primordial, earth-begotten tɛndaana of the Hills. It is a question of degree, the primacy of lineage membership being relatively stressed in the totemic avoidances of the deviant clans, the interdependence of corporate units in the greater aggregate being relatively stressed by most other Talis. From the point of view of the Hill Talis, there are, as we have learnt, two levels of interdependence amongst the Talis. There is the interdependence of the Hill clans *inter se*, focused in the External *Bɔyar* cult, which extends as far as Zubiuŋ; and there is the interdependence of all the Talis—and in fact of Talis and Namoos—in the wider politico-ritual synthesis which emerges most conspicuously in the cycle of the Great Festivals. The clans associated in the narrower synthesis all tend to have the tortoise and the water-tortoise taboos; the clans associated only in the wider synthesis tend to have taboos stressing their genealogical autonomy; Zubiuŋ and Gbizuŋ, which form the transition region, as it were, between the narrow association and the wide association, observe the tortoise and water-tortoise taboos, but do not consider them to be as distinctive of themselves as their special avoidances.

But this, we must not forget, is not the whole story. Totemic taboos, funeral rites, and *Bɔyar* ritual are symbols. What they symbolize is the body of moral and ritual norms correlated to each of the three zones of social relations we have been considering—the norms which are the organizing values of lineage, clan, and ritual community. As these rest, in the final count, on the mystical supremacy of the ancestor spirits, we can say summarily that these ritual observances symbolize the ancestors in the various aspects under which they govern social and individual life among the Talis.

The Significance of Animals as Totems

The totemic avoidances of the Tallensi all refer to animals, and it may well be asked if they have any common characteristics or outstanding peculiarities from the native point of view. Totemic avoidances of the type we have recorded are found throughout Voltaic culture; in fact, they are a notable feature of social organization among all the negroid peoples of the western Sudan. Not only is their pattern the same throughout this region, but the animal species most commonly prohibited are the same, and the myths accounting for the taboos have the same form.[1] To

[1] Cf. for example, the reference to the *Tne* among the Bambara, in Monteil, Charles, op. cit. 134–5.

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is thinking of the country at large as a unit with respect to marriage customs. Hill Talis often describe Tongo, Zubiuŋ, and Zoo as one *tɛŋ*. They are thinking of the close bonds uniting these places in opposition to themselves. But Tongo, Zubiuŋ, and Zoo are always distinct *tɛs* to one another. Tenzugu is described as a single *tɛŋ* when the coherence and close interdependence of the group of clans inhabiting it are emphasized; but when their genealogical cleavages loom foremost they are designated as separate *tɛs*. In the struggle for political dominance now going on between the head of Kpata'ar and the head of Bunkiuk, the partisans of both bitterly denounce one another for 'breaking up the unity of the *tɛŋ*', but insist, at the same time, that each clan holds its *tɛŋ* in its own right and does not come under the jurisdiction of any other, according to native custom.

Underlying these variations in usage is the generic conception of *tɛŋ* as a locality defined in relation to a corporate unit of social structure, a lineage, clan, or interconnected group of clans; and the variation in the width of reference of the concept reflects the variation in the range of corporate solidarity that is effective in different situations. In war the Tenzugu clans all hold together; in the matter of marriage one of them might quite easily come into conflict with another. The confluence of local, lineage, and politico-ritual relations, as we have previously noted, is the keel of Tale social organization.

Tɛŋ, like all the key concepts of Tale social organization, has a ritual significance as well. It denotes the Earth in its mystical aspect, either in the generic sense or in the specific sense of a particular sacred spot and its precincts. What is a *tɛŋ* in the sphere of secular relations may be, but often is not, a *tɛŋ* in the system of religious beliefs. There are two aspects to locality as a correlate of social structure: the secular aspect and the sacred. They merge in the social organization and the social philosophy of the Tallensi, and consequently also in linguistic usage. Sometimes one aspect is the focus of a social activity, sometimes the other, sometimes both together. If a man repeats the conventional formula, '*Tɛŋ la pu sayat ziem la ni*—The Earth does not permit bloodshed', his exclusive reference to the mystical aspect of the Earth is obvious; if he says of another settlement or region, '*Ba tɛŋ la mar ki pam*—Their land has plenty of grain', he is thinking solely of the material and secular denotation of the word; if he says of Ba'ari, '*Bam tɛŋ kuob la pu dara*—In their settlement farms are not sold', his implication to anyone familiar with native beliefs is that it is a taboo of the Earth (in its mystical character) at Ba'ari to sell parcels of the earth (in its material character).

Postponing for the moment the further elucidation of these ideas, we may note their most commonplace expression in Tale custom. A settlement name is *ipso facto* the name of the clan or group of maximal lineages whose home it is. A custom arising out of the rule of clan exogamy is that of addressing a wife by an appellation indicating her clan of birth. Most often it is the clan place-name, e.g. Zubiena, Wakiina. It may be the name of a well-known *tɔŋgban* in her natal settlement, e.g. Ba'ari women are called Saniiga, after the sacred grove of that name in Ba'ari. It may be a name indicating differences of custom and belief that distinguish her

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731 Whether there is food or famine, a bare sufficiency or a surplus for the
241 majority of people, depends on other things than human efficiency. It depends enormously on the weather. Drought (*waar*) in the early months of the rainy season brings hunger; an erratic distribution of rainfall causes a poor harvest; an unusually violent tornado (*sanziug*), crushing and uprooting the young millet, produces a shortage. Locusts (*tinta'aba*) descending suddenly, inexplicably, on the half-grown crops and devouring them, ruin the most efficient farmer's work. These are public calamities beyond human control, and they are an ever-present danger. During my first tour in Taleland a long gap in the normal sequence of the early rains threw everybody into a state of foreboding. Men went about restlessly, waiting anxiously for a sign of rain. During my second tour locusts destroyed the crops in one part of the country. The grief and chagrin of those whose crops had suffered showed that they felt they had suffered an irreparable loss.

164 Another possible natural disaster which would destroy physical well-
165 being and rend the social fabric is an epidemic of small-pox (*zinzaaŋ*) or of measles (*kasoo*).[1] Cases of *kasoo* occur every year and the mortality is high. I have heard of more than one family in which several children died of it in a week or two. Naturally the natives, who have no remedy for it, regard it with terror. The last small-pox epidemic (before 1937) occurred about a generation ago. The natives know that the white man's precautions will check any future epidemic, but they still dread the danger. For small-pox, when it comes, devastates social life. People stop visiting
[766 their kinsfolk and neighbours; stricken families are isolated by a wall of
758] thorn bushes; those who die of small-pox are not even given proper burial but are interred in the midden heap or thrown into the uncultivated bush. At such times small-pox must be referred to by a euphemism. It is 'the chief' (*na'ab*), and a death due to it is 'the chief has bestowed a boon (*na'ab maalya*)'.

731 These are the ever-possible public calamities which defeat human effort and skill. Private dangers also threaten the individual farmer. A snake might bite him as he stoops to hoe; blight might destroy his millet but leave his neighbour's farms unaffected; sickness might lay him low or deprive him of the help of wife or son.

788 It must not be thought that the Tale farmer goes about in a permanent
● 771 state of fear of these external dangers to his welfare and security. When
782 things are going well he does not give a thought to them. Living, as they do, at a subsistence level that gives them no regular surplus over what they require to satisfy their normal wants, the Tallensi take no long-term precautions, either individually or collectively, against the dangers of starvation or pestilence. They have neither the technical means nor the social institutions for such measures. But these threats do materialize often enough for them to serve as the realities towards which Tale acts of ritual self-protection, both individual and collective, are directed. Tallensi do not believe that these ritual acts will prevent natural disasters

[1] From the natives' description of the symptoms, I think the sickness they call *kasoo* is probably measles, but I am not certain and I have not been able to obtain medical corroboration.

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or personal mishaps. They do not attempt to control nature by means of ritual, though the content of their prayers might persuade the superficial observer that this is their object. Their ritual is concerned with the effects of natural phenomena and physiological happenings on the fate of the individual and the coherence of the community. Ritual is the means of fortifying the individual and the society against these effects. Tallensi believe that the fate of individuals and of communities depends on their relationships with mystical powers. Natural phenomena are the medium, as it were, by means of which these powers intervene in human affairs. If men offend them, they will intervene disastrously; if men please them, they will intervene beneficently. And men offend or please the mystical powers by the manner in which they behave to one another and by the way in which they observe the moral norms of the society and the ritual duties that symbolize these norms. Ritual—that is, sacrifice and prayer—is a means of keeping up a good relationship with the mystical powers. These, as we know, are principally the ancestors and the Earth.

Striving after Security: the Ritual Background

We have tried to state briefly how the Tallensi connect their ritual conceptions with their striving after personal prosperity and social security. This can be put in another way. The individual farmer, working his own land with the aid of his dependants for their common subsistence, looks to his and their immediate ancestors for spiritual protection. He and his dependants are personally responsible for the success of their efforts in the working of their fields. They are also personally responsible for the goodwill of their immediate ancestors. The sacrifices and prayers they offer to their ancestors at sowing and harvest express these private concerns. They enable them to enjoy the fruits of their labour with a clear conscience and to overcome the demoralizing effect of accidents, which they regard as private misfortunes.

On the other hand, public calamities are associated with the mystical powers of the Earth, which are a symbolical projection of the common concerns of mankind. By prayers and sacrifices the ritual officers who represent the community in relation to the Earth and the Earth in relation to the community, the tendaanas, preserve the benevolence of the Earth towards mankind. Even though ritual measures often and obviously fail to prevent a public calamity, they serve to reintegrate the community after the calamity has passed. The idea of the Earth's being concerned with the common good corresponds to the fact that the cultivations of individuals are but parcels of land cut from the limitless earth.

Just as the earth's surface is limitless, so the mystical power of the Earth is universal.[1] All men everywhere acknowledge this in the ritual observances by which they show their respect for the Earth. The most important of these observances are the rules concerning 'things found on

[1] The word *tɛŋ* belongs to the *ka*—*si* Noun Class and takes the third person singular pronoun *ka*. This is the pronoun always used to refer to the earth in its material aspect. But in its mystical aspect the Earth is commonly referred to by the third person singular pronoun *u* which is primarily used for persons. To conform with this rule, we write 'earth' in the first sense with a lower-case initial letter, and 'Earth' with a capital letter for the latter.

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613 A maximal lineage is not only an organic genealogical unit, it is also *ipso facto* an organic ritual unit. The focus of its genealogical differen-
769 tiation from and relative autonomy in relation to other like units, as
778 well as of its corporate solidarity and its continuity in time, is the cult of its founding ancestor. The material symbol of this is the shrine (*òɔɣar*) of that ancestor, custody of which is vested in the head (i.e. the most senior male) of the lineage. Among the Talis each segment of a composite clan has its lineage *bɔɣar*, distinguishing it from the other segments of the clan. But, in addition, groups of maximal lineages belonging, severally, to *different* clans, and not necessarily united *inter se* by ties of clanship, collaborate in the cult of their collective ancestors. The collective ancestors are believed to dwell in a *bɔɣar* known as an External *Bɔɣar*. An External *Bɔɣar* is usually a sacred grove, or a shallow cave in the hill-side, where the community meets for the ritual of the cult. The most important rites of the cult occur during the Harvest Festival, when thanksgiving sacrifices are offered and young men of the group are initiated into its mysteries by special ceremonies.

•771 Clanship ties, as we have mentioned, constitute the principal factor
794 of social integration among all the Tallensi. Among the Talis the cult
182 of the External *Bɔɣar* is another important factor of cohesion and equilibrium. It unites segments of different clans in the worship of
769 the ancestors, and is common to the majority of Talis clans. It represents a system of social bonds that cut across and counterpoise those of clanship. But this system is itself counterpoised, on the plane of religious values, by the organization of the Earth cult. Groups of maximal lineages belonging severally to *different* clans, which are not associated in the cult of the External *Bɔɣar*, collaborate in the rites of
[778] the Earth cult. Each such group has its special Earth shrines, generally in the form of sacred groves (*tɔŋgbaŋ*). Thus each maximal lineage of a composite clan among the Talis has one field of corporate social relations in terms of clanship ties, a different field of corporate social relations in terms of the External *Bɔɣar* cult, and yet a third field of corporate social relations in terms of the Earth cult. The system as a whole forms a remarkable structure of mutually balancing fields of social and politico-ritual relations integrated into a complex unity. Sectional loyalties in one direction or on one level are counterpoised by similar loyalties in another direction or at another level. And the system as a whole stands under the governance of the supreme sanctions of Tale social life, the ancestor cult and the Earth cult. To crown it all, moreover, there is the ritually sanctioned and regulated polar opposition of Talis and Namoos focused in the relationship of the chiefship and the tendaana-ship.

The Internal Constitution of the Maximal Lineage

613 In this scheme of clanship ties and politico-ritual relationships the

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have no clear notion of witchcraft, no detailed theories of its mode of operation, and no institutionalized means of combating or sterilizing it. A witch (*sɔi*) is supposed to fly about (*u aɣarəme*) at night in the guise of a ball of fire; she—for the Tallensi tend to think of a witch as a woman, though they say that men may be witches too—is supposed to be clairvoyant, to 'see (*nye*)' hidden things. She can recognize fellow witches, foresee death coming to a particular person, prophesy an epidemic, and so forth; she may be beneficent, able to impart luck to a person in a mysterious way, or maleficent, killing people by eating (*ɔb*) their souls (*sii*). This is the sum of Tale ideas about the nature of witches. Actually, these qualities make up what is mainly an imaginary stereotype. One never hears of particular individuals being credited with the socially useful qualities or being suspected of possessing the anti-social qualities attributed to witches. Witchcraft is only attributed to people *ex post facto*, when an event occurs for which an explanation in terms of witchcraft is sought.

Witchcraft is something on the fringe of Tale mystical thought and ritual values. I have more than once heard elders of the most conservative way of thinking, to whom the native scheme of ritual values is the most important thing in life, declare roundly that there is no such thing as a witch. Though the Tallensi do not put it into clear words, they obviously feel that the idea of witchcraft is a mixture of superstition and folk-lore, and not a part of the system of mystical and ritual values that really matters for the conduct of life. Of course, superstition and folk-lore are not wholly negligible. Circumstances occur, now and then, in which people fall back on the idea of a witch's occult aggression in order to cope with anxieties and frustrations that are normally neutralized through the agency of the ancestor cult; and then a particular person may be accused of being a witch. Significantly, in every case that has come to my notice, some dating back twenty or thirty years and all of them together numbering less than ten, the accused has been a woman. Most accusations of this sort are in the first instance made by women against co-wives, and are symptomatic of the tensions inherent in the joint family.

An accusation of being a witch is the private affair of the accused's husband and his maximal lineage, her paternal family, and those of her *saarət* who are in touch with her. In former days, if the accusation was confirmed by a diviner, the accused might insist on undergoing the arrow ordeal (*kuh sɔ-peema*), or be compelled to do so by her husband's lineage and her *saarət* in order to prove her innocence. She had to stab herself with a poisoned arrow in public at the same time as a branch of a *kenkan* (Ficus) tree was plucked; and if she were guilty, it was believed that she would die before the branch withered. But it is characteristic of the Tale attitude to witches that a person who died thus was accorded a proper funeral—unlike, for example, a person who

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754 dies of small-pox—and that the decision was not accepted as conclusive by her *saarət* whom it directly implicated. A proven witch's uterine 602 kin, her children in particular, felt the shame for a time, but they were [593] not publicly stigmatized or penalized. Even the husband of an apparently guilty woman would, judging by what happens nowadays, very often continue privately to believe in her innocence; and if he admitted her guilt would not allow this to influence his relations with his children by her.

754 The public attitude to a witch nowadays is illustrated by the following 574 case which occurred during my stay among the Tallensi. A young man from Yinduuri went to visit a kinsman at Moyaduur. Arriving at his 602 kinsman's house, he was offered some cold porridge by an old woman of the house who happened to be the only person at home. Now, cold porridge is not a dish to offer to a guest. The poorest native would blush with shame if he had nothing better to put before a visitor. But in this instance the young man was weary and hungry after a long tramp. His kinsman was not at home to offer him more seemly hospitality and the old woman had nothing else. So he accepted it gladly.

754 Later in the day, on his way home, the youth was suddenly taken ill with what soon proved to be acute dysentery. He at once thought of 627 the old woman's cold porridge and told his family of this when he 787 reached home. Next day he died. Thereupon his father accused the old woman of having bewitched the youth through the medium of the cold porridge, and so caused his death. Her unconventional hospitality and the sequence of events seemed to leave no doubt about her guilt. There was, it is true, no obvious motive, but this was not taken into consideration. Indeed, as one man remarked, the youth was himself partly to blame, for no self-respecting adult would eat cold porridge at someone else's house. However, the old woman was sent for and the matter submitted to divination. As the dead youth's clansmen had no doubt about her guilt, it is not to be wondered at that the diviner declared her to have bewitched him. In vain she protested her innocence. The head of the youth's maximal lineage told all his people to mock (*wool*) her with a derisive chant. Neighbouring clans took up the chant, as she passed on her way home, and some weeks later it was made the theme of one of the dance songs of the Golib Festival. 'Wherever she goes', my informants said, 'men, women, and children will look askance at her and jeer at her for being a witch. Shame and grief will dog her, [626] and she will pine away and die.' It was for fear of this kind of public ostracism that anyone accused of being a witch in the old days insisted on undergoing the arrow ordeal.

754 The main reason why witchcraft is of minor significance in Tale mystical thought is because the elaborate ancestor cult and the Earth ● [771] cult deal adequately with most social and psychological tensions in terms consistent with the total social structure. The idea of witchcraft is not